



Note: Information in this document may now be superseded. Additional public moorings and no-anchoring areas marked by reef protection markers may have been installed see [GBRMPA website](#). Observe and comply with all instructions as directed on public infrastructure.

Fitzroy Reef

Fitzroy Reef is the largest reef in the Bunker Group and is a 3650 ha drying, closed ring reef with a large, deep (6-10m) lagoon that can be entered through two narrow, natural channels. Although no cay is present at the reef, an intermittent sand body often appears at low tide on the south-western end of the reef. The presence of a lagoon attracts many travelling vessels, as the lagoon is a good anchorage.

For more information on the management of Fitzroy Reef please see below.

Natural Values – Corals

The corals at Fitzroy Reef are diverse and are one of the important values of the area. The lagoon includes well-developed coral communities on bommies interspersed with large tracts of sand in addition to a large community of branching corals on the lagoon floor. Near the lagoon entrances is a group of bommies that have moderate to dense coral cover. This area is the prime site for activities such as snorkelling and glass bottom boat coral viewing.

Natural Values – Marine Turtles

The reef flat and lagoon are feeding areas for green, hawksbill and loggerhead turtles. As a lagoonal reef system, Fitzroy Reef is important to turtles, particularly to loggerhead turtles, which feed on molluscs in the lagoon floor sands. It is estimated that the annual population of turtles at Fitzroy Reef is approximately 1,000 green turtles, 100 hawksbill and 100 loggerhead turtles. These numbers represent a small but extremely important component of the turtle populations of the southern Great Barrier Reef.

When in the lagoon at Fitzroy Reef, be on the look out for surfacing turtles. Travel slowly with no wake.

Cultural and Heritage Values

Cultural

The locality and the surrounding area is culturally significant to the Taribelang Bunda, Bailai, Gooreng Gooreng, and Gurang Aboriginal Traditional Owner groups. The waters and fringing reefs around the Capricorn Bunker islands are part of the cultural landscape and are still the focus for traditional access and use of available resources. Spiritual connections are often associated with the natural and cultural resources.

The Gurang Land Council is the representative body for these Traditional Owner groups. Their traditional estates range from the mouth of the Fitzroy River in the north and to the town of Childers in the south, including both inland and offshore areas.

Heritage

A wreck is visible on the reef flat on the southwest corner of the reef, and is thought to be that of the steamer S.S. *Pacific* (1903). The wreckage consists of some wooden remains, rusted spars and boilers.

Current Use

Approximately 20 tourism operators run either daily or extended liveaboard trips to Fitzroy Reef. Recreational users also visit Fitzroy Reef, as the presence of the lagoon provides a safe and reliable anchorage. The most popular activities undertaken by recreational and tourism users at the site include snorkelling, diving, fishing, and when the weather is right, surfing off the south-eastern tip of the reef. The area is also important for commercial line and harvest fishermen who fish around the reef, in addition to other commercial fishermen who anchor adjacent to the reef for protection from the weather.

Current Management Arrangements

- Fitzroy Reef is a Habitat Protection (dark blue) Zone under both State and Commonwealth Zoning Plans. [Click here](#) to find out what you can do in these zones. Marine Park Zoning map 17 shows zoning at Fitzroy Reef.
- A No Anchoring Area has been designated in the centre of the lagoon (refer map). Anchoring is available adjacent to the lagoon entrance channel and in the shallower areas at the south-western end of the lagoon.
- A No Structures Area has been designated in the southern end of the No Anchoring Area to protect the rare and fragile coral (refer map).
- A Small Structures Area has been designated in the northern end of the No Anchoring Area to ensure that large structures do not restrict access to the popular snorkelling areas (refer map). Small structures include snorkel trails.
- Permitted moorings – a trigger limit of 10 will apply to the total number of permitted moorings. When an application is received for further moorings, it will trigger a review of the site management arrangements. It is anticipated that the review could include public advertising of the application, and will involve discussions with users of the location including the Local Marine Advisory Committees and Traditional Owners.
- Daily tourism operations – a trigger limit of four will apply to the total number of permitted daily operations. When an application is received for further daily operations, it will trigger a review of the site management arrangements. It is anticipated that the review could include public advertising of the application, and will involve discussions with users of the location including the Local Marine Advisory Committees and Traditional Owners.

Important Note:

This applies to tourism operators who do not have permission for daily access to this site:

- Holding multiple permissions for the same operation in an attempt to gain increased access is not acceptable.
- Generally an operation is determined by the primary vessel used.

Developing the Management Arrangements

In 2005 the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority and the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service began looking at the management strategies in place at Fitzroy Reef. Some management strategies were put in place over many years to address issues as they arose, but were not compiled into one, readily accessible management strategy. From September to November 2005 comment was sought about the management strategies from users of the area. This was done in collaboration with the Burnett, Gladstone and Capricorn Coast Local Marine Advisory Committees. The two main issues were the size of the No Anchoring Area and the impact that additional structures could have on the impact on visitor experience in this relatively remote location. These issues were discussed with relevant stakeholders and changes to the boundary of the No Anchoring Area were made.

Further Information

For further information please contact the Authority on (07) 4750 0700 or email policyandplanning@gbmpa.gov.au.

Related Links

- Zoning
- Onboard - The Tourism Operators Handbook
- Queensland Environmental Protection Agency, Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service



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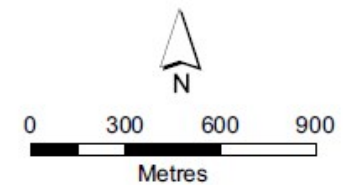
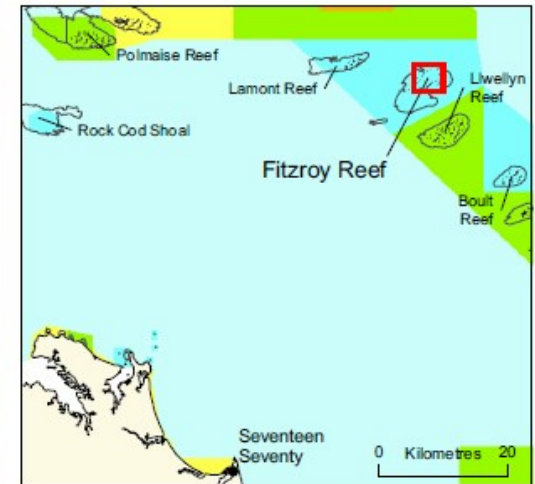


WARNING This map must not be used for marine navigation. Comprehensive and updated navigation information should be obtained from published hydrographic charts.

Site Management Arrangements *Fitzroy Reef (23-007)*



-  No Structures Area
-  Small Structures Area



Map projection: Unprojected Geographic
Horizontal Datum: Geocentric Datum of Australia, 1994
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